

Some Plain Centralization Talk By Big Republican Editor

The following editorial appeared in the Chicago Inter Ocean, a republican newspaper:

In addressing the people of St. Louis on Tuesday President Roosevelt advocated the national control and regulation of interstate railroads. He advocated also the national control and regulation of industrial corporations and stock companies which do an interstate business.

As an illustration and precedent of these policies, he pointed to the government's control and regulation of the national banks.

Never before, within our recollection, has such a sweeping declaration come from a president of the United States in times of peace. Never has a graver issue been presented by an American president even in times of war.

Regulate and control all the interstate railroads! Regulate and control all the industrial stock companies doing an interstate business! Regulate and control each and both classes, after the manner in which the national banks are regulated and controlled by the federal government today! What does this mean?

In Illinois alone, some 25,000 stock companies are doing business today. In the whole United States, the number of such companies hardly falls below a million. How many of these do an interstate business, and, therefore, come under the president's plan of control and regulation from Washington?

According to the president's idea, the number must be at least three-fourths of the total. For, as was set forth in the Roosevelt-Beveridge child labor bill, and was expounded at length in the senate by the senator from Indiana, all factories producing articles which are exported beyond state lines are to be regarded as subject to federal control and regulation under the interstate commerce clause of the constitution.

Think of it! Seven hundred and fifty thousand stock companies, transacting practically three-fourths of the business of the United States to be licensed, regulated and controlled, even to a listing of their stock, by a department at Washington!

Seven hundred and fifty thousand stock companies to be examined by federal examiners, to be inspected by federal inspectors, to be picked and chosen for reprobation, dictation, or extermination by federal officials, and to be supervised or administered after the manner of a national bank in case of insolvency!

Think of it! There are only 6,500 national banks in the United States! There are 750,000 stock companies subject to the operation of this gigantic plan! An army of inspectors, examiners and receivers, as large as the standing army of the United States? A bureau in Washington as large as the pension office and the army and navy departments combined! Tens of thousands of men and tens of millions of money and such a vast and intricate machinery as no country on earth has even ventured to approach for its every purpose or all purposes combined!

Yet how trivial these causes as compared with their effect! By means of this vast machinery, this standing army of inspectors, this plenitude of governmental power in Washington, any president in the White House would be able to reach his hand to the uttermost part of the United States, place his index finger upon any crossroads stock company that might exist in the smallest hamlet, and decree, as the comptroller of the currency today decrees, whether this American citizen or that American citizen should continue in business or should be plunged into bankruptcy and ruin.

"But the courts," some one may say. The reply is too apparent. To a business man whose going concern has been crushed before his eyes by a government order, a court offers nothing but justice—only justice and nothing more, for no suit for damages can lie against the government of the United States. He may walk from a federal court with his vindication in his hand, but will still bear on his brow the stamp of financial ruin.

Is this fancy? Is this a far-sought example? Alas, no. We have only to turn back to the experience of the packers of Chicago to realize that the concentration of such stupendous power in the hands of the central government, that the possibility, yes, the probability of its being exerted in the manner in question, has been not only contemplated, but has been specifically intended by the president on the lines laid down in his St. Louis speech.

Any man who will look back to the history of the meat inspection bill will recall that the

conflict which raged around that measure, between the president of the United States and the house of representatives, did not turn on the question of a closer federal inspection or the payment of the cost of that inspection. It turned on the issue whether or not there should be vested by law in the hands of the president's appointee, namely, the secretary of agriculture, the power to close the packing houses of Chicago on his mere say-so, and to keep them closed until the owners could secure a decision by the due and laborious process of the courts.

In the face of the president's public declarations that he would, or would if he could, put the Chicago packers in the penitentiary, their struggle to protect themselves from arbitrary executive orders was regarded, and regarded rightly, as a struggle of life and death.

And when one thinks of the vast resources and material power in the hands of the Chicago packers, when one contemplates the apprehension and desperation with which they viewed a struggle with a department of agriculture armed with despotic power, it is easy to realize what chance one ordinary stock company of the 750,000 would have before the upraised hand of executive power in Washington, if ever the president's era of universal executive control and regulation should overwhelm us.

Why does the president seek to make the president of the United States the absolute lord over industrial life and death? Why does he deem it wise to give one American citizen the ability to reach into every nook and cranny of this country's commerce and finance, to compel homage or support from every man of power between the Atlantic and Pacific, to smite all opponents back into impotence and beggary, to raise all friends into wealth and power, and thus to constitute, if he have but the will, a self-perpetuating regime which all the parties and party organizations that the country has ever seen would not be powerful enough to overthrow—which would, in fact, realize here in the United States, a despotism of which a Russian czar never dreamed for the simple reason that he did not have in his dominion any such machine as that which the federal control and regulation of 750,000 corporations would place absolutely and irrevocably in the hands of the chief executive?

The president answers this question. It is to arrest or anticipate or prevent "industrial chaos."

"Industrial chaos!" Ominous phrase—not because the evils of industrial life today are really due to industrial chaos—far from it. Where they exist they are due rather to over-organization and it needs but a statement of the fact for the truth to be recognized. But "industrial chaos" is a phrase which, from the mouth of a president of the United States, must strike a chill to the heart of every man who knows the origin, growth and maturity of modern socialism.

"Industrial chaos" was brought into the world of political agitation by Marx, Lassalle, Engels and Robertus, the socialists who, half a century ago, founded and fathered the militant socialism of the Europe of today. The phrase has come down from one generation of socialists to another, always the shibboleth of those who would turn the constitutional liberty of modern times into the compact slavery of the socialistic state.

And the same words today roll from the lips of a president of the United States, and for the same purpose, namely, to justify the transformation of industrial liberty into industrial servitude, and the sacrifice of all the ideals of constitutional freedom on the altar of an industrial despotism.

"Industrial chaos!" The phrase has been bandied about by every socialist agitator in Europe from Engels to Liebknecht, from Marx to Bebel, from Lassalle to Jaures—bandied about as an excuse for disrupting the whole present order of society, as a pretext for upsetting the whole financial and commercial system of today. And now it comes with authority from the lips of the president of the United States as his justification of a plan which would abolish the republic within twenty-five years, bow the necks of 100,000,000 Americans before the face of one autocrat in Washington and turn the United States of North America into a civilized wilderness—no nation at all, but only a wreck of a socialist's dream.

After contemplating such a monstrous proposition, it is difficult to realize why this

nation was once aroused by the Granger movement, by the greenback campaign, or by the free silver agitation of William Jennings Bryan. How trivial, by comparison, today seems a proposal to give the nation a fifty cent dollar or printing press money!

How infantile the proportions of such a proposition which would merely throw the country into hard times, when compared with a proposition which, if realized, would abolish the republic, personal liberty, individual initiative, personal success and personal ambition, and leave us, the people of the United States, with nothing but two wreck-strewn shores, and ruin—complete industrial ruin—stretching out between.

Washington Letter

Washington, D. C., October 14.—It is reported in Washington that Mr. Roosevelt has kindly agreed to allow New Mexico to come in as an independent state. The territorial governor of New Mexico makes this announcement and declares that a bill to that effect will be introduced into the Sixtieth congress and that the president will approve it. This determination on the part of the administration merits all commendation. Everything that could be done from the White House to keep Oklahoma and the Indian Territory out of the sisterhood of states was done. All that was done proved a failure. Probably the object lesson given by the voters of those two territories sufficed to convince the president and his advisers that it was useless to try to keep New Mexico, as a separate commonwealth, out of the union. It is always possible that the president may be misquoted, or that he may change his mind. But the present indications are, that the lesson read to the administration by Oklahoma has been heeded, and that the next state of the union will be New Mexico. That it will be a democratic state goes without saying, provided the democratic party is true to the ideals which it set for itself almost twelve years ago, and which today it is not likely to abandon.

A point raised by a St. Louis newspaper concerning the deep waterway to the Gulf is worth giving wider currency. This newspaper points out that all the waterways commission asks for the Mississippi river is \$40,000,000. This is a good round sum, of course, but when our St. Louis contemporary goes on to point out that in the peaceful year of 1906 the war expenditures of the United States amounted to more than \$63,000,000 above the last Cleveland year, which of course does not include pensions, it seems to have scored a point. A deep waterway from the lakes to the sea, or from the lakes to the gulf, or both, would be of incalculably more advantage to the people of the agricultural states of this union than the Panama canal or an enormous navy.

Nobody has ever accused Mr. Roosevelt of a tendency to silence. On all subjects from spelling reform to international peace, he has spoken much, loudly and sometimes well. Within the last ten days he has delivered nearly a score of addresses to tens of thousands of people, six of his speeches having been carefully prepared in advance and filling each about a page of an average newspaper.

But amidst all this flow of oratory not one word slipped out touching upon either the tariff or the third term.

Is not the tariff question a present day issue? Most people think so. The question of mere protection to infant industries is not now involved; that principle is not even attacked. But the tariff wall has ceased to be a protection to the weak, but has become a means whereby they are robbed by the strong. The law making power which once protected the young and struggling manufactures of the nation, needs now to be invoked to protect the people against these same industries grown great, arrogant and welded into trusts. Mr. Taft has taken cognizance of the demand for revision, but wants action postponed until the Sixty-first congress. Secretary Strauss spoke at length upon it in his Memphis speech. But the man who sits at the head of the cabinet table is silent on this issue, though he entered public life as a moderate tariff reformer. His silence encourages the standpatters. The veteran General Grosvenor,